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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT NUMBER 002
Venezuela Task Force
0830 EDT Sunday, April 14, 2002

CHAVEZ REASSUMES PRESIDENCY

(C) Chávez, dressed in civilian clothes, returned to Miraflores Palace via helicopter and reassumed the presidency early Sunday morning. During his speech to the nation, Chávez was unusually conciliatory and largely non-threatening, although he did call on the media to reflect on their "behavior." He also called for calm and asked his supporters to return to their houses and end any disturbances. Chávez noted the legitimacy of his government, but also expressed the need for a loyal opposition in Venezuela to present true criticisms and alternatives. He promised that there would be no revenge or persecution of his opponents, but obliquely noted that changes have to be made. He stated that he had never resigned the presidency. Additionally, forces loyal to Chávez control Fuerte Tiuna, site of the military headquarters, reports the Embassy. (*CNN en Espanol, Caracas 1009*)

**EMBASSY WILL ISSUE WARDEN MESSAGE/REQUEST VOLUNTARY
DEPARTURE**

(SBU) Embassy EAC decided to issue a warden message advising Amcits to stay in their homes and will request voluntary departure authorization Sunday morning. Embassy staff have also been advised to tell Amcits and Venezuelan nationals asking to stay at official American residences that their homes do not offer special protection. Venezuelans asking for political asylum in our Embassy will be advised that the USG does not provide asylum at its embassies. There continue to be no reports of AmCit injuries.

(TF/Embassy Caracas telcon)

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN CARACAS REOPENS

(U) Embassy reports that Maiquetia Airport in Caracas has reopened, as has the road to the airport. The various U.S. carriers expect to make decisions today on when to resume flights.
(TF/Embassy Caracas telcon)

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